

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 18, line 20, with the following rewritten paragraph:

A8  
--The curve in Figure 7 shows the optical performance of component 6 in terms of percentage of light transmission in the working spectral range expressed in nm. It can be seen that the percentage is very close to 100% within the entire working range. The behaviour of this component under laser flux is shown to be excellent within the utilisation wavelength range.--

IN THE CLAIMS:

Kindly cancel claims 1-10, without prejudice.

Please add new claims 14-23 reading as follows:

A9  
--14. A thin layer material consisting essentially of amorphous hafnium oxide having a density less than  $8 \text{ gm/cm}^3$ .

15. A stack of thin layers, comprising at least one layer of amorphous hafnium oxide having a density less than  $8 \text{ gm/cm}^3$ .

16. The stack of thin layers as claimed in Claim 15, wherein the stack comprises at least one layer of another material formed on a surface of the amorphous hafnium oxide layer.

17. The stack of thin layers as claimed in Claim 16, wherein said another material comprises silicon oxide.

18. The stack of thin layers as claimed in Claim 15, wherein the stack comprises alternate layers of amorphous hafnium oxide having a density less than  $8 \text{ gm/cm}^3$  and another material.

19. The stack of thin layers as claimed in Claim 18, wherein said another material comprises silicon oxide.

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20. An optical component having on at least one surface at least one layer of amorphous hafnium oxide having a density less than  $8 \text{ gm/cm}^3$ .

21. The optical component as claimed in Claim 20, and comprising a stack of thin layers of amorphous hafnium oxide.

22. The optical component as claimed in Claim 21, wherein the stack comprises alternate layers of amorphous hafnium oxide having a density less than  $8 \text{ gm/cm}^3$  and another material.

23. The optical component as claimed in Claim 22, where said another material comprises silicon oxide.--

**IN THE ABSTRACT:**

Kindly cancel the present abstract, and insert in place thereof, on a separate page, the following new abstract:

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